

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, Report No. 4, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on February 17, 2015.

2

“PAPERLESS” MEETING MATERIALS

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the City Clerk continue to explore the options presented and report back by the end of summer 2015 with a detailed report setting out timing, cost and other considerations;
- 2) That the following report of the City Clerk, dated January 19, 2015, be approved; and
- 3) That the deputation of Mr. Kevin Hanit, Queensbridge Drive, Concord, be received.

Recommendation

The City Clerk in consultation with the Chief Information Officer and the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services recommends:

1. That this report be received for information.

Contribution to Sustainability

Any reductions achieved in the use of paper will have a positive impact on environmental sustainability. Potential solutions will be measured as well for their contributions to administrative and financial sustainability.

Economic Impact

This report speaks to a range of options based on different approaches to achieving a goal of “paperless meetings”. There has not been the opportunity to fully cost each option.

The annual cost of printing Council and Committee agendas, attachments and communications ranges from \$6,600 to \$7,000. Assuming the high end, a 25% reduction in paper amounts to \$1,650 in annual savings; a 50% reduction will result in approximately \$3,300 in annual savings. Any commensurate increase in desktop printing will offset savings.

One of the options to be considered is the acquisition of an agenda management system, with acquisition costs estimated to be in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range plus annual maintenance being approximately 15% of acquisition cost. The Chief Information Officer has advised that previously approved funding for acquisition and maintenance can be repurposed within the Information and Technology Management Department's budget.

Communications Plan

Changes to Council/Committee processes will be accompanied by a communication strategy including media releases where warranted.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's direction that a timeline be provided for the introduction of ‘paperless meetings’ for Council and Committee. In doing so, the report seeks to clarify the objective of ‘paperless meetings’ and to facilitate a discussion on potential options and their implications.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 4 – Page 2

Background - Analysis and Options

Council has requested a timetable for the implementation of “paperless” meetings.

At its meeting of December 9, 2014, Council adopted Item 59 of Report No. 41 of Committee of the Whole entitled ‘NEW BUSINESS – “PAPERLESS” MEETING MATERIALS, being the Member’s Resolution submitted by Councillor Shefman:

Whereas the materials – agendas, reports, background materials, etc. required to support the City of Vaughan Council meeting process involve substantial amounts of paper;

Whereas the City of Vaughan is committed to sustainable practices in all of its activities;

Whereas all of these materials are being reproduced electronically for posting on the City Web site already; and

Whereas, through technological advancements, the ability to provide meeting materials electronically to Members of Council, staff and others requiring such information, is feasible through a variety of different platforms.

It is therefore recommended:

1. That staff provide a timetable to implement “paperless” meeting materials for all Council meetings including Council, Committee of the Whole, Committee of the Whole (Working Session) and all other such meetings;
2. That the timetable be provided by the January meeting of this Committee;
3. That the “paperless” meetings report project an approximate time of implementation.

Establishing a timeline for “paperless” meetings first requires a common understanding of the concept and the objectives to be achieved.

Taken literally, a ‘paperless’ meeting would take place entirely through the use of computer and projection screens. No agendas would be printed by any participants, either through bulk production (high speed reproduction) or through desktop or other local printing devices.

No municipal jurisdiction maintains an entirely paperless system. At minimum, archival copies are required for the public record with those copies relating in form and content to their electronic versions. It is assumed, therefore, that the request to provide a timetable for ‘paperless meetings’ is intended to minimize the consumption of paper and to maximize the use of technology so that access and utility throughout the Council cycle is improved, with cost, environmental impact and effort being reduced, as compared to a paper-only system

Timelines and cost implications will vary, depending on the objective.

If the objective is to simply reduce paper costs, then options to reduce the distribution of agendas, minutes and other component parts of a Council/Committee cycle can be explored. Council could also formally decide to forego the distribution of printed copies of presentations made at Committee. [Timeline: immediate]

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 4 – Page 3

Since documentation is currently available on-line, with the exception of last-minute additions to an agenda (such as addendum items, late communications), participation in meetings can be done without resort to paper for basic meeting material. [Timeline: immediate]

If Council wishes to enhance the current SharePoint based Council/Committee agenda management system to allow participants to both view the agenda electronically and save and annotate it on a custom basis, an investment in enhancing the current system can be made. [Timeline: 4th Quarter 2015]

Similarly, if the desire is to implement a dedicated agenda management system, a resource and funding commitment would be required, along with time for implementation. [Timeline: 4th Quarter 2015].

These and other options to reduce the use of paper in the Council/Committee process will be explored during the Committee's deliberations at Committee of the Whole (Working Session). Additional information on potential options is set out later in this report.

The current process

To facilitate a discussion on potential options, an understanding of the Council/Committee agenda management process is required.

Council operates on a monthly cycle of meetings. At its highest level, the process involves:

- the decision to write a report, and the determination of its authors and collaborators, is made
- research (often consisting of the review of previous reports)
- drafting; circulation for consultation and comments; redrafting
- finalization; signatures; approvals
- processing and publication of committee agendas (reports, communications)
- printing and distribution of committee agendas, including posting to the City's website
- Committee meeting deliberations, culminating in the recording of committee recommendations to Council.
- processing and publication of the committee report to Council, and the Council agenda (reports, communications, by-laws, minutes)
- printing and distribution of Council agendas, including posting to the City's website
- Council meeting deliberations and decisions
- processing and publication of Council decisions (extracts, by-laws, minutes)
- printing and distribution of Council decisions, including posting to the City's website

At each stage of the process, information is created or recorded either in electronic form, or by hand. Ultimately, information that is recorded in the public record exists in both paper and electronic form.

A more granular description of the process.

The City Clerk's Office coordinates the report submission process and the creation and publication of the public record.

Every report submitted for consideration by a Committee or Council must first be approved by the City Manager. The first opportunity for that approval occurs at a meeting of the staff Agenda Review Committee ("ARC") the agenda for which is compiled by the City Clerk's Office after receiving electronic and paper copies of the draft reports from submitting departments. The

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 4 – Page 4

reports are uploaded to the Vaughan On Line (VOL) intranet site to allow internal departments the opportunity to review the draft reports prior to the ARC meeting.

Once approved by the City Manager either at the ARC meeting or subsequently, departments forward electronic and hard copy of reports to the City Clerk's Office for preparation of Committee agendas. Reports are accompanied by an agenda submission form containing information about the report such as searchable keywords to assist in the processing and indexing of the report.

Meeting agendas are published electronically to the City's website and VOL with individual meeting items linked to an agenda 'page'. Communication pages are also created and individual communication items are linked to the agenda as they are received. Addendum and referred items are also added to the agenda page if required. For Council, by-laws are also uploaded and published to the website. Upon completion of a Council cycle, the agenda is consolidated and updated with extracts containing Council's decisions, each of which is back-linked to individual agenda items. The on-line extract contains the complete record of the Council decision, including communication items and presentations, each of which is easily accessible in a side-bar.

Printed copies of meeting agendas are distributed to the Mayor and Members of Council on the Friday at least one week prior to the meeting. Electronic copies of agendas are posted on the public website one week prior to the meeting.

Agenda packages are printed on the City's high speed reproduction equipment operated by the City Clerk's Office.

The number of copies produced, and their distribution, differs from committee to committee, and to Council. Typically, copies are produced for:

- Members of Council, and their Council Executive Assistant (plus one additional copy for the Mayor's office. (19 total)
- City Manager's Office, Commissioners, Directors, and other City staff depending upon the committee, who receive the bulk of printed copies. (between 39 and 69 in total)
- City Clerk's Office for meeting staff, public use in the meeting room, and for the archival record. (3 to 4 copies)
- Members of the public and media. (between 20 and 45 in total available at the meeting)

Meeting agendas and related materials are posted to the "Agendas, Meetings and Extracts" page on the City's website. All such materials are available for electronic use without printing. Speed of access, and restricted ability to annotate documents (depending upon the methodology and system selected by the user) allow for 'paperless' participation with varying degrees of satisfaction.

Assessment of available options should include consideration of the Corporate Information Technology Strategy

The agenda management system exists within a larger framework of electronic and paper corporate documents. It is recognized that the agenda management system must evolve to serve the interests of all of its users, meaning that access to Council/Committee information should be provided in an accessible, useful, timely, accurate and sustainable (both environmentally and fiscally) way. The City Clerk's Office has sought the engagement of the Innovation and

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(W/S) Report No. 4 – Page 5

Continuous Improvement Department to assist in developing a solution based upon an analysis of the current systems, available options, and quite importantly, the linkages that might be exploited (or missed) with other corporate technology initiatives. An operational review has been advanced to 2015 to support this process.

The ultimate goal would be to make the Council/Committee process a part of a strategic City-wide approach to treat information as a valuable asset.

Consistent with the Corporate Information Technology Strategy adopted through Council's approval of the recommendations contained in Item 1 of Report No. 1 of the Priorities and Key Initiatives Committee on April 8, 2014, any consideration to date of an agenda management system has been with the intention of developing an integrated enterprise system, rather than a separate standalone tool. For ease of reference the strategic directions of the Plan are set out at Attachment 1 to this report.

It is in this context that the "Paperless Meetings" concepts should be examined.

Discussion Options:

The implementation of any potential option(s) will involve thorough analysis.

Adjusting to the scope and scale of any option or approach that might be identified, staff will employ standard methodologies to ensure that solutions are effective and affordable. Such methodologies would include: a functional assessment; jurisdictional and business process reviews; an assessment of current systems and their potential/need for re-engineering; and interviews with stakeholders. All assessments will seek to ensure the existence of sufficient corporate funding and capacity to acquire, integrate and support the solution.

The range of options extends from the status quo to the implementation of enterprise systems.

Option A: Status Quo

Since Council/Committee materials are readily available on-line, the status quo option is available for discussion. A brief demonstration of the current system will be provided at the Committee meeting.

Option B: Reduce Number of Copies Distributed

Agenda packages are printed on the City's high speed reproduction equipment operated by the City Clerk's Office. The heaviest print run of the year is made for the June cycle of meetings with print costs ranging between \$725 to \$750 (approx.) for all materials in the cycle (with the exception of colour copies, where required). For the other cycles in the year the cost per cycle is in the order of \$625 to \$625. Given the current examination of paperless meetings, the City Clerk's Office will be canvassing its stakeholders on the need to continue distributing agenda packages, minutes and other related documents to each of them.

Option C: Customize Current SharePoint Tool

The system currently in use by the City Clerk's Office to manage the Council/Committee process was implemented in conjunction with the new City SharePoint-based website as a 'Phase 1' solution. Future phases were to improve automation and user utility, including integration with a separate project for the Council Chamber. Funding is not yet in place for Phase 2. A companion issue to the availability of funding is the potential increase in costs associated with developing rather than purchasing an agenda management system.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(W/S) Report No. 4 – Page 6

Option D: Acquire a Dedicated Agenda Management System

Agenda and board management systems are available on the market. Some municipalities and boards have experienced success in their implementation but others have encountered operational challenges. Though the potential benefits of a standalone system are considerable, caution should be exercised regarding such systems' ability to integrate with other enterprise systems, as well as their reliability.

Option E: Acquire an Enterprise System for Electronic Documents and Records

The current budget plan contemplates the acquisition of a corporate electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) and continued funding for the program will be before Council during its budget deliberations. The fundamental purpose of the EDRMS project is to better manage information as a corporate asset so that it might be more easily and efficiently used. Not only does an EDRMS system assist in finding, storing, protecting and sharing information, it can be used as a corporate workflow tool to gain significant administrative efficiencies. Further, an EDRMS can be used as an effective platform for service kiosks and on-line tools for enhanced citizen engagement and service provision. The benefits of an EDRMS come at significant expense and so the value proposition of implementing such a system is a key consideration. Were one to be implemented at the City of Vaughan, it may be prudent to incorporate agenda management into that system to maximize the investment and opportunities for corporate system integration.

Put another way, should a separate agenda management system, and other purpose-built departmental systems, be implemented, there may not be a sufficient value proposition for the acquisition of an enterprise system. The more separate systems which exist in the corporation, the more the inertia to avoid the opportunity to manage information as a corporate asset in a way that drives high performing integrated activities.

Discussion Questions

To assist it in arriving at potential options, Committee may wish to examine questions such as the ones that follow:

For example, to understand the concept of paperless meetings, one might ask:

1. Is this an exercise to seek out 'low hanging fruit', or to do something more?
2. What segment of the current system should be paperless? Should it be an agenda-builder in addition to something that replicates the paper product in an electronic form?
3. Is paper used to write the report, or to collaborate on its writing (in other words even though the document might be shared electronically, will it be printed in order to read and revise it?)
4. Will paper be used to prepare for a meeting? (In other words, is it necessary to print out an agenda (or individual reports) in order to prepare for a meeting?)
5. Is paper to be used to participate in a meeting (in other words, once a meeting is underway, will participants use an electronic agenda exclusively?)
6. Should users print only that portion of an agenda they think they will need (bearing in mind that it is more costly to print using desktop printers rather than the high speed print engines located in the print shop/mail room at City Hall)

To understand better the broader implications of any potential solutions:

7. How does the potential solution link to the corporate IT Strategy?
8. Do separate document management systems undermine a corporate effort to implement EDRMS and manage information as an asset?

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2015

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 4 – Page 7

9. The most effective electronic agenda management systems exploit the efficiencies of workflow; is the workflow payoff big enough for a standalone agenda management system? Will it undermine opportunities for corporate workflow?
10. How easily can any system be integrated into the City's technology architecture?
11. What resources will it take to integrate?

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The discussion in this report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, in particular:

Service Excellence – Demonstrate Excellence in Service Delivery; and
Staff Excellence – Manage Corporate Assets

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

This report supports a discussion on enhancements to the way Council/Committee materials are managed, and identifies potential options that might be pursued. Options identified by Council as having merit for exploration will be reviewed by staff and reported to Committee as soon as possible.

Some of the options set out in this report can be implemented within one year of the time the necessary resources are put in place.

A reduction in the use of paper can be accomplished immediately. Not all users, however, will be adept at an electronic-only approach to meeting management and may choose to print agendas and their component parts in any event.

Other options, such as the introduction of an agenda management system or full implementation of a corporate electronic document and records management system, will take longer to implement.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Corporate Technology Strategic Plan Strategic Directions

Report prepared by:

Jeffrey A. Abrams, City Clerk
jeffrey.abrams@vaughan.ca

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)